Amendments to the Specification

Please amend the paragraph starting at line 29 on page 5 as follows:

--Seq. I.D. Nos. 11 and 12 show the amino acid linker sequences that can be used between the two domains of a fusion ~~protien~~ protein.--

Please amend the paragraph starting at line 14 on page 11 as follows:

--Nucleic acid constructs expressing fusion proteins may also include regulatory elements such as promoters, enhancers and 3' regulatory regions, the selection of which will be determined based upon the type of cell in which the protein is to be expressed. The constructs are then introduced into a vector suitable for expressing the β_2m fusion protein in the selected cell type. --

Please amend the paragraph starting at line 24 on page 12 as follows:

--By way of example cDNA encoding a β_2m fusion protein with an N-terminal methionine to initiate translation may be subcloned into pET21-d (Novagen) which directs recombinant protein to inclusion bodies. Alternatively, commercially available insect cell expression systems such as the Baculovirus Expression Vector System from Pharmingen (San Diego, CA) can be used for the combined expression and folding of β_2m and β_2m fusion proteins, where the expressed proteins will require only subsequent purification.--

Please amend the paragraph starting at line 20 on page 17 as follows:

--Following transfection of the BL21 (DE3) strain of *E. coli*, protein synthesis is induced with IPTG, cells were harvested, lysed, and inclusion bodies washed and solubilized. Following refolding of the recombinant material, it was further purified by gel filtration and/or affinity chromatography with anti-β_2m antibodies. Experiments in which acid-stripped cells expressing only HLA-A2 were incubated under various conditions with the B7-β_2m fusion protein produced as described above, and then subjected to FACS analysis using conformationally-sensitive antibodies of varying specificities confirmed the following: (1) that the B7 domain of the fusion protein is natively folded; (2) that the β_2m domain of the fusion protein is natively folded; and

(3) that the β_2m domain of the fusion protein functions to stabilize MHC I expression (data not shown).--